

# Early Music Review

## EDITIONS OF MUSIC

JEAN SIGISMOND COUSSER (KUSSER): LA CICALA DELLA CETRA D'EUNOMIO SUITE NR. 3  
Sechs Consortsuiten für 2 Oboen, Fagott, Streicher & B. c.,  
Urtextausgabe – Herausgegeben von Michael Robertson  
Walhall EW748 (Edition Schönborn)  
14 + 34pp, €29.80 (score and parts)

This impressive volume comes with three wind parts, five string parts and an optional written-out continuo realization. It is prefaced by a letter from the current Count of Schönborn-Wiesentheid, whose library contains (amongst many other jewels) the remained of the original print of this set; Robertson, whose doctoral thesis was on such repertoire, wisely adds a *Basse de violon* to the seven surviving part-books. After an overture come a *Sommeil*, a *Trio de Flûtes* (where recorders replace the oboes above the violas), *Les Songes*, *Les mesmes*, *Marche* (key changes from D minor to D major), *Trio doucement*, *Les Gladiateurs*, *Air* (back to D minor), *Polichinelles*, *Arlequins* and finally an *Air Gayment*. Most are through composed, but some are bi-partite. Cousser/Kusser deserves to be better known and Robertson's plans to issue all six works are to be welcomed.

CALDARA: MISSA SANCTI FRANCISCI  
Herausgegeben von Alexander Opatrny  
Walhall EW 539  
5 + 64pp

This is a substantial volume for a not terribly substantial piece; the Gloria is under 70 bars and the Credo a little over a hundred. That is not to say that the music is not very much worth exploring – Caldara writes well for chorus and, although there are solo sections throughout the work, they are not beyond most amateur singers and could easily be taken by members of a decent choir. It could have been half its size, had the doubling instruments (cornetto and two trombones at the top of the score and bassoon just above the continuo line) been assigned to that very role and their staves combined with the appropriate voice. I doubt I will be alone in finding the distribution of the staves

awkward either in passages where the *bassetto* is supplied by the violins, which are printed *above* the voices. The introduction and critical notes are only given in German. The score retails at €28.50, with a vocal score and parts also available.

SCHULTZE: KONZERT B-DUR FÜR  
ALTBLOCKFLÖTE, STREICHER UND BASSO  
CONTINUO

Herausgegeben von Klaus Hofmann  
Walhall EW 986  
5 + 40pp

The editor of this three movement work has tried – thus far in vain – to identify the composer; giving him the christian names Johann Christian is apparently an educated guess. Be that as it may, this high baroque concerto with a first movement full of arpeggios and scales, a central adagio in which the strings accompany pizzicato until the final sudden dramatic tutti and a bi-partite triple time finale that adds wide leaps to the technical demands made of the soloist is certainly one that players will welcome. €21.80 for the score, with parts and a keyboard reduction also available.

Next in the pile were three editions of arias for voice, soprano recorder, strings and continuo. The earliest is Pepusch's "Chirping warblers" (EW 980, mezzo, recorder, violin, violin/viola and continuo, 3 + 10pp, €17.50) which was part of a 1715 masque, *Venus and Adonis*. The original performances involved multiple violinists but editor Peter Thalheimer suggests that one can play the upper string part and another Pepusch's viola line (which he prints in treble clef). At 49 bars in length, it is not a huge piece, but singers and recorder players alike will enjoy this addition to their repertoire. The set includes a second score without a cover and the necessary parts.

"Quell' esser misero" by Alessandro Scarlatti (EW 978, soprano, recorder, violin and continuo, 4 + 7pp, €16) is from his 1698 opera, "Il prigioniero fortunato". A through-composed work of a little over 50 bars (if the *vide* mark is ignored!), the voice part intertwines with recorder and

violin (who overlap but never play together), and the final instrumental phrase ignores the wind instrument and adds a second violin and viola. Thalheimer includes parts for all of the instruments and a second score without cover.

The third is “Cares when they’re over” from Francesco Bartolomeo Conti’s opera “Clotilda” (EW 999, soprano, soprano recorder or violin, strings and continuo, 4 + 10pp, €16.50). This is a full-blooded Da Capo aria with recorder and full string section. Once again the set includes everything required for a performance. The recorder part is quite demanding, while the voice is more charming and graceful, which is always an enjoyable contrast in concert.

VANDINI: KONZERT D-DUR FÜR VIOLONCELLO SOLO, 2 VIOLINEN, VIOLA & B. C.  
Herausgegeben von Markus Möllenbeck  
Walhall EW 967  
8 + 15pp, €16.50

As a colleague and close friend of both Vivaldi and Tartini, it will come as no surprise to discover that this three movement concerto poses considerable challenges to anyone who wishes to play it – double stopping, very high and intricate passagework, extended string crossing motifs. The central andantino is slightly odd in featuring a rather bland solo violin part above the solo cello and continuo; the editor suggests this was undoubtedly for Tartini, but I fear even he would have had his work cut out to make it interesting; of course, the solo cellist has a much easier job, given that (s)he starts on the first beat and ends on the last with no breaks in between. It would be interesting to hear the work, if only to see if it works aurally in which it does not visually.

*Brian Clark*

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## RECORDINGS

### *Medieval*

#### NOSTRE DAME

*The monophonic Repertoire of the famous Notre Dame School*  
Sanstierce  
55:01  
Talanton TAL90016

This is a beautiful recording by Early Music enthusiasts with a special interest in the surviving oral traditions rooted in the Christian and Islamic world. Sanstierce have taken as their theme the Virgin Mary, since she appears in both the Qur’an and the Bible. Two members of the ensemble are German while Bassem Hawar is originally from Baghdad. Some source material for improvisation and embellishment is taken from early manuscripts (*Cod. Guelf. Helmst., MS. Pluteus and Egerton 274*); but both Hawar and Schneider have devised their own pieces in appropriate styles and adapted or reconstructed their instruments.

In the opening piece Maria Jonas shows the fine quality of her voice in its range, purity and power, her breath control and command of ornaments, conjuring up the sounds of Islam, which share their roots with Christianity. She masters prolonged vowels, microtones, cadences, and the occasional Arabic catch in the voice, and the sound rings out as if it were a Call to Prayer. The shruti box provides a drone, and her voice is complemented sympathetically by flute and *djoze* accompaniment.

The Middle Eastern atmosphere is further captured in a piece devised by Bassem Hawar with tremolo, pulsing high notes, sliding tones, long phrases and occasionally two strings played simultaneously. Embellishments on high notes are accompanied by plucking and dance-like percussion. In another piece by Hawar *djoze* and gittern interweave their sounds, bowing and plucking, with embellishments and off-beats.

Not to be overshadowed, though, Our Lady of Roman Catholicism is asserted with intensity and fervour in two pieces drawn from the Egerton manuscript. One begins with a slow plaintive narrative style and is followed by a fast tuneful movement occasionally slowing into long phrases. Midway is a heartfelt cry “O Maria!” and a harmonium effect from the shruti box. This cry recurs dramatically in the final piece, after slow plucking, wide-ranging tones

in the voice, deep string sound and a plaintive mood. The recording ends with a slow dignified dance rhythm which illustrates the divergence of the two cultures brought together by Sanstierce.

The CD cover is illustrated strikingly with the eyes of Maria Jonas appearing as through a *hijab*. As a substitute for a more expensive booklet, there is small close writing in German and English crammed on to the unfolding cover, and a little about the instruments can be learnt from a Sanstierce website. But then, Talantan specialises in some wonderfully unusual recordings.

*Diana Maynard*

## 15th century

NUPTIÆ FACTÆ SUNT - MUSICA AD URBINO AL  
TEMPO DI RAFFAELLO

Ensemble Bella Gerit

69:00

Bella Gerit BG0207

Music by Brumel, Elimot, De La Fage, Festa, Jacotin, Josquin, Lupus, Moulu, Mouton, Richafort, De Silva & Willaert

This CD juxtaposes music by 'big names' such as Willaert, Brumel, Festa, Josquin and Mouton with less familiar masters such as de Silva, Richafort and Moulu and the even more obscure, such as Brunet, Jacotin, de la Fage and Elimot. The male voices of the ensemble are joined by gamba, bombard, organ, lute and sackbuts for generally effective performances of this mainly early 16th-century polyphony from the Medici Codex of 1518, the property of Lorenzo, lesser grandson of his Magnificent namesake. Painted by Raffaello and carved in marble by Michelangelo, it is hardly surprising that Lorenzo attracted the finest musicians to his opulent Court, and the fine fruits of their genius are to be found in the Medici Codex. The ensemble Bella Gerit produce a generally rich and impressive sound, except where male alto Alessandro Ciofini is forced into the soprano range and he sounds tentative and strained, as unfortunately in the second track on the CD, Brumel's "Sicut Liliun". There are imaginative instrumentations, including effectively strident accounts for tenor voice, bombard, sackbuts and drum of Mouton's "Exalta Regina Galliae" and "Domine, salvum fac regem" and versions of some motets for solo voice and organ. Less successful is Josquin's lament "Nimphes des Bois", which sounds a bit lumpy. There is the odd infelicity in the English translation of the booklet – there

would appear to be a ready living to be made translating Italian programme notes into English – but nothing which renders it incomprehensible, and full texts of the motets and translations are supplied. This new fashion of comprehensively exploring a specific choirbook provides a very useful picture of music-making in one place and at one point in time, allowing for close comparison between the works of composers, who often knew one another and worked together.

*D. James Ross*

## Renaissance

### MASTERWORKS AND MINIATURES

*Organ and harpsichord music from Renaissance Venice*

Richard Lester

77:53

Nimbus NI 5931

Music by Buus, A & G Gabrieli, Guami, Merulo, Padovano & Willaert

Richard Lester plays music by a range of composers who worked in Venice: Buus, the two Gabrielis, Guami, Merulo, Padovano and Willaert. Most are played on an Italian-style organ built in 1977 by Giovanni Tamburini for St. James Catholic Church, Reading with the rest on an unnamed harpsichord. This organ is very well suited to the music and has a bright outgoing organo pieno with good flutes for contrast; Lester's registration works well throughout. The harpsichord sounds a bit flabby and lacking in brightness in comparison. The playing is confident and rhythm is steady, a bit too much so in the ricercars and toccatas which could do with some more flexibility, but effective in the canzonas. The real meat of the recording is made up of four big toccatas by Merulo interspersed with Intonazioni by Giovanni Gabrieli (though the modes of both are not matched). These toccatas are very substantial pieces and Lester keeps the listener involved throughout. The sleeve notes are a mixed bag: simplistic and out of date on the historical background, especially in comments on the Council of Trent and music, they are informative on the music and organ registration. There are some typos, the more serious of which is that Valvasone, the church in Friuli with an important surviving 1533 organ by Vincenzo Columbi, has here become 'Valvestone' (presumably one of those annoying auto-corrections!). This has clearly been a labour of love on Lester's part and is certainly worth listening to. There is an associated edition of the music and a DVD

demonstrating fingering and ornamentation.

Noel O'Regan

## 17th century

### BRUHNS & SCHEIDEMANN: ORGAN WORKS

Bine Bryndorf (Roskilde cathedral organ)

79:18

Da Capo 6.220636

The organ in Denmark's Roskilde Cathedral is celebrated in this recording of music by two composers from the Danish/German region of Schleswig-Holstein. Built by the Dutch builder Hermann Raphaelis in 1554 and rebuilt a hundred years later to the design of Gregor Mülisch, the organ was much altered over the succeeding centuries before being restored to its baroque state in the 1980s. The sleeve notes refer to Scheidemann and Bruhns as, essentially, the alpha and omega of the great 17th-century North German organ tradition which grew out of the music of Sweelinck and, of course, flowered particularly in Buxtehude who is not represented here. The contrast between the two composers is very clearly brought out by Danish organist Bine Bryndorf who exploits the registrational possibilities of this historic organ extremely well. There are lots of contrapuntal climaxes in the Scheidemann, and exciting echo effects and pedal solos in the Bruhns. The recording producer has been particularly successful in capturing the range of stops, especially the pedal, with great clarity and definition. This will be a must-have disc for lovers of early organ music but will appeal to anyone wanting a lively introduction to one of the instrument's great creative periods.

Noel O'Regan

### KASPAR FÖRSTER

Les Traversées Baroques

Chemins du Baroque CDB001

Continuing her mission of bringing to proper prominence the music of 17th-century Poland, Judith Pacquier has teamed up with director Etienne Meyer to showcase the work of Kaspar Förster. The music in this programme is smaller scale, more concentrated and more adventurous than the Mielczewski and the Zielenski of the previous recordings. Förster studied with Carissimi and it is impossible not to hear

echoes of the latter's Jephthe in the harmonic twists in the first psalm *Confitebor tibi Domine*. The excellent sleeve notes tell us that the introduction of such *seconda pratica* into the Hanseatic bridgehead of Gdansk gave rise to a "mini Thirty Years War" of musical controversy – only resolved, it seems, when more names were invented to give decent separations between ever more avant-garde styles. Instrumental styles were also beginning to dominate musical lines, and the singing is suitably virtuosic. In particular, the soprano Anne Magouët creates line, life and energy, totally transcending the coloratura. Instrumental contributions (to both vocal and purely instrumental pieces) involve two cornettinos, two violins, dulcian and gamba. What makes the instrumental playing especially attractive is the fact that within each pair of instruments, each one says the same thing but finds its own voice to say it. (Judith Pacquier and William Dongois, cornettino; Stéphanie Erös and Josèphe Cottet, violin.) This personality, added to wonderful playing, makes the performance particularly engaging. The dulcian of Mélanie Flahaut combines complete fluency with marvellous bounce and life – taking hold of the shape of the music as a whole. There is music that plays with the edges of harmonic possibilities, beautifully shaped lines and a clear concept of the music in performance – recorded with an excellent natural balance and spacing. A gem.

Stephen Cassidy

### MICHNA: LOUTNA ČESKÁ / THE CZECH LUTE

Ensemble Inégal, Adam Viktora

50:35

Nibiru 01602231

You might think the idea of sitting through almost an hour of soprano duet strophic settings of an unintelligible language with only brief ritornelli for a pair of violins would be torture, but not when the music in question is (a) by Adam Michna whose songs all sound like Xmas carols and (b) performed by Ensemble Inégal who could transform even the driest material spring to life. Previous recordings of material from Michna's settings of Czech poetry have relied on the reconstructive powers of musicologists, but the recent discovery of the original Violin 1 part has meant that Adam Viktora and his excellent musicians take one step closer to the original; indeed, Song 11 now is complete, as it is for only soprano and solo violin above the continuo (here string bass, one plucker and organ – no kaleidoscopic special effects here!) Although the full texts of all the songs are given along with

their translation, only selected verses of each are performed. While realizing that this is not the most approachable of music, I would seriously encourage anyone interested in 17th-century music to give it a go; the singing and playing are glorious and Michna's duets really are very pretty.

*Brian Clark*

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## ENGLISH HARPSICHORD MUSIC

David Pollock

78:00

Music & Media MMC112

Music by Blow, Byrd, Croft & Purcell

David Pollock has recorded his personal choice of music from Byrd, Blow, Purcell and Croft, covering 150 years or so of the pre-Handelian English keyboard tradition, showing both the continuity and diversity of the music written over the period. The picture might have been further enhanced by the inclusion of something by Gibbons but what we have is very illuminating and played with great clarity and good sense of style and swing. Pollock plays on a copy by Anne and Ian Tucker of the Ruckers-Hensch instrument in the Cobbe Collection which gives a very bright sound, emphasised by close miking. This works better in the later music than perhaps in the Byrd whose four variation sets are the most substantial pieces here. Pollock uses quarter-comma meantone throughout which works very well and adds to the richness of the sound. There are informative liner notes and the recording makes an admirable introduction to the English keyboard repertory.

*Noel O'Regan*

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## Baroque

### HASSE: ARTASERSE (1730, VENICE)

Franco Fagioli *Arbace*, Sonia Prina *Artabano*, Maria Grazia Schiavo *Mandane*, Anicio Zorzi Giustiniani *Artaserse*, Antonio Giovannini *Megabise*, Rosa Bove *Semira*, Orchestra Internazionale d'Italia, Corrado Rovaris

189:00 (2 DVDs)

Dynamic 37715

This live video recording from a 2012 production interjects images from the set (basically an oversized staircase for much of the time) and from the pit (where we learn that the baroque ensemble of the OII play on modern instruments). Hasse's music is lively and

dramatic, full of energy and extremely demanding on all of the six principals. The trouble with that kind of music is that it is too easily pushed too hard; even singers of this high calibre frequently struggle to find room for all of the notes, such as the frenetic pace, and what sound to me like composed Da Capo decorations only serve to highlight their difficulties. Ultimately, although it is great to have a visual record of this production (and of any Hasse opera!), there are too many caveats to recommending it to our readers; that said, I never have been a great fan of opera and perhaps regular visitors to the opera house will get a completely different impression.

*Brian Clark*

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### JONES: EIGHT SETTS OF LESSONS FOR THE HARPSICHORD, LONDON 1754

Mitzi Meyerson

106:00

Glossa: GCD921808

John Jones's harpsichord lessons (i.e. suites), published in 1754, are here rescued from an undeserved obscurity by Mitzi Meyerson. Jones has written some attractive music which shows an individual voice with a distinctive synthesis of the compositional elements common to composers of the period. As Meyerson points out in her illuminating notes Jones was well respected in his day, holding down three big positions including organist of St. Paul's Cathedral up to his death in 1796. Whether because of Handel's long shadow, as suggested by Meyerson, or because his published music was confined to three sets of keyboard lessons, some chants and a few songs, Jones has been largely forgotten, which is a pity since the music on this recording both delights and surprises. Meyerson plays on a double-manual instrument by Michael Johnson which is very skillfully recorded to maximise its potential. The playing is always intelligent and expressive, showing a sympathetic approach to Jones' text while not being afraid to extend it by filling out and ornamenting. The CD ends with a single Brillante movement from one of Jones' later lessons printed in 1761; it would be great to hear more of that later music if Meyerson is inspired and helped to record it. Her current recording has already made a significant contribution to the story of English music.

*Noel O'Regan*

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MARAIS: PIÈCES FAVORITES  
François Joubert-Caillet, L'Achéron  
75:53  
Ricercar RIC364

This is a sampler for a forthcoming project to record the complete five *Livres de Pièces de Violes* of Marin Marais. It has been initiated by Jérôme Lejeune, musicologist and himself an accomplished viola da gambist, familiar through many recordings on the Ricercar label, which he heads. He has commissioned François Joubert-Caillet, and the ensemble L'Achéron, to record them. This introductory disc gives a taste of what we might expect, with a selection of pieces from each of the five books.

It is the second disc by L'Achéron I have heard. The first was a recording of *Ludi Musici*, a publication of dances by Samuel Scheidt, which I reviewed earlier this year. In that recording François Joubert-Caillet directed the ensemble playing treble viol, in what I felt was a superb performance.

On the evidence of that, and now this recording, he is an outstanding virtuoso and musician. The opening piece, *Prélude en Harpegement*, from the 5th book (the one in F major) is beautifully played, poised, controlled and wonderfully eloquent. It is followed by a succession of well-known pieces from all five books: *L'Arabesque*, *Le Rêveuse*, *Feste champêtre*, *Les Voix humaines*, *Tombeau pour Mr de Sainte Colombe*, 18 tracks in all, most of them familiar from many recordings by so many marvellous players. *Couplets de folies* also appears, but in an apparently earlier and shorter version found in an Edinburgh manuscript.

His approach is fairly literal, mostly following Marais' directions, but free in his approach to tempo, for example in *La Guitare*, (and thankfully isn't tempted to pluck any of it). The accompaniments are beautifully played. He is joined by the second bass viol in pieces for two viols from Book I, and the sound is wonderfully full and lush, but always clear.

With such a galaxy of superb recordings from which to choose, why buy this one? Well the playing certainly makes it worth it. He plays with complete technical command, excitingly brilliant in the rapid passages, moods ranging from tenderly lyrical to dramatic, with a great variety of attack. One can only look forward to the progress of the undertaking with great anticipation.

The booklet has a brief essay from the player, and a more extended one from Lejeune. Information about the instruments played is a bit sparse, with nothing about the solo bass viol, and hopefully that will be provided in

future as the series is produced over the coming years. It is a mammoth undertaking, and, to my knowledge, if completed, will the first time this has been achieved. Played with this level of insight, sympathy, brilliant virtuosity and eloquence, it promises to be fully worthy of Marais' wonderful legacy.

Robert Oliver

MARAIS: PIÈCES DE VIOLE, CINQUIÈME LIVRE  
(PARIS, 1725)

Leif Henrikson *bass viol*, Lars-Erik Larsson *theorbo*  
57:38

Daphne 1050  
Suites in e, G & g

Enjoy the combination of bass viol and theorbo, it is less busy than the more usual harpsichord, and allows the viol player a wider range of dynamics, or at least, that is what one feels. Someone like Paolo Pandolfo doesn't have any problem communicating his soft playing in any company. However, not to make invidious comparisons, this is a very enjoyable performance of three suites from the 5th and final of Marais' great series of *Livres*, and it opens with the suite in E minor which concludes the book. As it happens, the *Allemande* of that suite is extensively marked by Marais, with *enflés*, *doux* and *fort*, and *Traisné*, so it is a little disappointing not to hear them more exaggerated. They play seven movements from that suite (thankfully omitting the famous 'Operation') with an engaging deftness, frequently going his own way rather than observing Marais' signs for *enflé*, or even his specifying an open string, but the playing is not without its charm.

The G major suite follows, with eight of its movements. In his publication, Marais marks those movements he describes as more difficult with what he calls a *cartouche*, and of the movements they choose, only one is so marked. However one has to be a very good player to play the 'easy' movements as well as they are played here. He has an understated approach to the chords, for example, which emphasises the bass, and his ornamentation is delightfully light. And the charming *Chaconne* (with its *cartouche*) is given a typically poised and expressive performance.

The G minor suite, of which they play ten movements, including *Le tombeau pour Marais le Cadet* perhaps demonstrates the characteristics of the player – beautifully light and deft, but ultimately lacking that rhetorical flair which can make this particular movement very affecting.

Robert Oliver

SCHERZANDO

TELEMANN: VI OUVERTÜREN NEBST ZWEEN

FOLGESÄTZEN

Anke Dennert *harpsichord*

64:09

Genuin GEN 16411

This recording presents a close and highly successful match of music and instrument. Telemann's six overtures were published in Nuremberg 1745 following the composer's visit to Paris a few years earlier. The title describes them as 'overtures followed by two accompanying movements in French, Polish or otherwise trifling manner, and in Italian style'. They combine features of both the French and Italian structures of the time. The music represents the composer at his most inventive, matching some contrapuntal ingenuity with brilliant passagework in the overtures, writing affective middle movements (each labelled 'scherzando' as well as with a tempo or mood indication like 'largo' or 'dolce' – hence the title of the CD) and sparkling allegros or vivaces to finish. Dennert plays on the historic two-manual 1728 harpsichord by the Hamburg-based Christian Zell, preserved in the city's Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe. She plays with confidence and style, bringing out both the extrovert and more inward-looking features of the music. The beautifully mellow tone of the harpsichord is excellently recorded in quite a resonant acoustic which emphasizes the public nature of Telemann's music here. I enjoyed this recording very much.

Noel O'Regan

ZELENKA: PSALMI VESPERTINI I

Ensemble Inégal, Prague Baroque Soloists, Adam Viktora

79:56

Nibiru 01612231

Continuing their impressive exploration of Zelenka's church music, Ensemble Inégal under Adam Viktora have embarked on a series devoted to his settings of Vespers psalms. Not in recreations of services as such, but grouping suitable pieces without the framework – so there is no chant, and neither an ingressus or a hymn. For the first CD, only *Confitebor tibi Domine* (ZWV72, and the longest work at over 16 minutes) is a world premiere recording, but there will be many more along the way. Janice Stockigt's typically informative booklet note tells us that the music dates from late 1725 and the

presence of a setting of *In exitu Israel* suggests Vespers of a Confessor as the most likely original context. There are many magnificent moments, but I derived the greatest joy from the (unexpectedly French sounding) *Laudate pueri Dominum*, where a solo bass sings against a female angelic choir. I doubt the Dresden Kapelle had singers of such purity of voice, but I also do not think I would enjoy hearing it sung by more operatic voices! Anyone who has not heard the opening of the *De Profundis* which is tagged on after the Magnificat cannot fail to be impressed by the sonorities. This is another magnificent achievement by these Czech performers and I look forward to hearing much more of their discoveries in the years to come.

Brian Clark

ZELENKA: MISSA PASCHALIS,

LITANIÆ OMNIUM SANCTORUM

Gabriela Eibenová, Terry Wey, Cyril Auvity, Marián Krejčík, Ensemble Inégal, Adam Viktora

68:21

Nibiru 01582231

There are few composers who rival Zelenka when he is in full festive mood; the Catholic chapel in Dresden must have been an exciting place to be when one of his great masses was performed and the impact of the first performance of his *Missa Paschalis* ZWV7 with four trumpets and pairs of oboes and flutes can only be wondered at. Adam Viktora's full forces go at it with aplomb and I even felt the hairs raise on the back of my neck at various points. The mass dates from 1726 and was performed on "the second day of Easter" (i. e., Easter Monday), the piece for the principle feast having been penned by his boss, Heinichen. All that would change within a few years after the latter's death, although Zelenka was not successful in his efforts to be elected to his official position. He wrote the All Souls Litany ZWV153 in 1735 as part of the court worship in the hope of Maria Josepha's success in giving birth to an heir; Zelenka seems to have had a fondness for his employer and this work again is full of melodic delights, as well as demonstrations of his impressive counterpoint and word-setting skills. Typically, these performances are judged to perfection with an excellent solo quartet, well-disciplined and balanced choir, and stylish orchestral accompaniments. Every Zelenka fan must own this.

Brian Clark

## CONCERTI BIZARRI

Irish Baroque Orchestra, Monica Huggett  
73:00

Linn Records CKD526

Music by Fasch, Graupner, Heinichen, Telemann & Vivaldi

Seven concertos for all sorts of combinations of instruments feature on this entertaining disc; there are two pieces each by Fasch (including one without orchestra!) and Graupner, and one each by the other three composers listed above. Of course there are many interconnections between the four German composers; all of them was influenced by the development of the Italian concerto, whose chief exponent was Vivaldi. The solo line-ups are: flute and oboe, two cellos, two violins and bassoon, and flute d'amore (actually played on a normal traverso), oboe d'amore and viola d'amore (possibly not the piece you are thinking of – this is Graupner at his bizarre best). There are solo concertos for oboe (Heinichen) and bassoon (Graupner again). The concerto without orchestra is Fasch's septet for pairs of oboes da caccia, violas and bassoons with continuo. The music is always earcatching and the captivating performances (and the bright recording) abound with verve and energy; one striking overall impression is the diversity the five composers brought to a single form, by use of instrumental colour and a variety of compositional styles, some opting for virtuosic display, others (by whom I primarily mean Graupner) preferring to find new ways to keep the listener guessing. Definitely an excellent disc from all concerned.

*Brian Clark*

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## OF WITCHES AND DEVILS

Tartini, Paganini, Locatelli

Luca Fanfoni *violin*, Luca Ballerini *piano*

61:40

Dynamic CDS7749

These pages are not really the place for a review of this disc for, although it contains dazzling performances of some baroque music, they are not in the style that our readers expect; as examples of modern violin virtuosity, of course, they are wonderful, and will surely find appreciation in the mainstream music press.

*Brian Clark*

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## SO HÖRET MEINEN GESANG

*Klopstock settings by G. Ph. Telemann & J. H. Rolle*

Antje Rux, Susanne Lagner, Tobias Hunger, Ingold Seidel  
SATB, Leipziger Concert, Siegfried Pank

68:04

Raumklang RK3502

Rolle: *David und Jonathan*

Telemann: *Komm Geist des Herrn* TVWV 1:999, 2 extracts from *Messias* TVWV 6:4

This CD has been a constant companion over the past few weeks; I simply cannot get over the imagination of the 78-year-old Telemann when setting these texts by Klopstock, which is as fresh and lively as ever it was. His Whitsun cantata, *Komm Geist des Herrn*, and his two extracts from *Messiah* date from the year Handel died, 1759 (Telemann was four years his senior and would live for another eight years!), are full of original sonorities and beautiful, almost rococo harmonic twists and turns; truly the music is marvellous. So too are the performances, with four excellent soloists and an equally impressive orchestra. In fact, such is the "modern" sound of the Telemann that I did not even realise that the last track on the disc was actually by Johann Heinrich Rolle, an "elegy" on the David and Jonathan story to soprano, tenor and orchestra. Now little known, Rolle in fact only lost out to C. P. E. Bach to become Telemann's successor in Hamburg by a single vote! This short work (just under 12 minutes) clearly demonstrates why he was so highly thought of; again, the playing and singing contribute hugely to this impression. I hope that we will hear more Rolle (and, indeed, Georg Benda, and more Telemann!) from these musicians – this is a beautiful CD which I shall treasure for a long time.

*Brian Clark*

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## Classical

## HAYDN: CELLO CONCERTOS

Pavel Gomziakov, Orquestra Gulbenkian

59:55

Onyx 4151

I love both the Haydn cello concertos, and I like the fact that Pavel Gomziakov has opted to "pad out" this recording with arrangements of slow movements from other works by Haydn (the C major violin concerto and Symphony 13), and he is a very fine cellist indeed, accompanied by one of Europe's leading chamber orchestras. My only problem with the disc is the fact that it

is played on modern instruments, and there is still a slight lack of air around the notes, especially in the bass section, which prevents it getting full marks from EMR. Don't get me wrong, the first time I heard the C major cello concerto, the soloist was Mstislav Rostropovich, so no-one can accuse me of being anti-"old school"; rather, for me at least, HIP should influence everyone playing all musics. Indeed, I think I would rather hear these forces in entirely different repertoire – perhaps some living composers could write works based on Haydn's concertos for cello?

*Brian Clark*

MOZART: PIANO TRIOS, KV 502, 542, 564  
Rautio Piano Trio  
57:11  
Resonus RES10168

Rarely does a disc come along that unexpectedly brings so much pleasure as this one; I confess that I was non-plussed (at best) when it fell from the envelope and I saw the repertoire (a staple of the chamber music club I used to have to attend on behalf of the local newspaper) but from the opening notes, I just knew it was a total winner. The balance between the three instruments is beautifully handled (the cello only sometimes emerges from its bass line duties), and the gorgeous tone Jane Gordon gets especially from the upper reaches of her violin is absolutely to die for. The three works on the disc only last just under an hour, but what an hour! According to the booklet note, the Rautio Piano Trio also play modern repertoire on suitable instruments, so they are clearly a force to be reckoned with. I hope they and Resonus will continue to explore period performances of some less well-known pieces for the line-up, too – fabulous recordings, magical performances.

*Brian Clark*

D'AVALOS: I MAGNATI DELLA MUSICA IN ABRUZZO

Ensemble Labirinto Armonico  
56:05

Baryton 201202  
Music by Avitrano, Ruffo and Pietro Vinci

The idea of a programme devoted to the music associated with the Italian Court of Abruzzo featuring music by relatively unknown composers such as Vincenzo Ruffo, Pietro Vinci and Giuseppe Avitrano is a good one. However this production is a strictly mixed bag. The presentation is a bit of a disaster, with a programme note English translation which is practically unintelligible and full of schoolboy howlers such as 'she was an endowed and estimated interlocutor by more eminent persons of Renaissance.' An enduring phobia of the definite article makes entire passages impenetrable, while no texts or translations are supplied for the motets. The singing too is seriously mediocre, worse in some tracks than others, while a dull and gloomy acoustic does the performers no favours at all. Just occasionally an artful bit of viol playing or singing pops through the texture, but seriously these are isolated moments. Once we get on to the instrumental section of the CD things are a little better, but this is still not terribly impressive music-making from the two Baroque violins, leaving me with only one track, Vinci's "Vergine pura" sung by solo contralto (male alto?) Alessandro Giangrande accompanied by viols which is rather nice. I was surprised to note from the photos in the booklet that this is a generally young ensemble, having assumed that these were performers who were perhaps a bit 'past it' and/or conforming to standards long left far behind in the professional recording world. The music seems relatively competent, but it is sometimes hard to tell. A missed opportunity.

*D. James Ross*